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REMARKS BY U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH DAN MOZENA AT THE BANGLADESH GARMENT MANUFACTURERS' EXPORT ASSOCIATION IFTAR

AUGUST 5, 2012

Asalamu Alaikum, Ramadan Kareem, Good Evening, Everyone,
Mohiuddin, thank you greatly for inviting me to share this Iftar and your annual musical reality show.

As we know from the CD of last year's musical reality show and as I suspect we will see shortly in this year's show, the workers of the RMG sector are talented, greatly talented both on and off the shop floor.

I am most acquainted with the talent of RMG workers on the factory floor, as I saw a decade ago when I visited RMG factories and as I see now when I visit factories, workers and management, when working together, create miracles ... miracles like making Bangladesh the second largest RMG exporter in the world.

Of course, to realize the vision of the middle-income Bangladesh, the Golden Bangladesh, Bangladesh as the next Asian Tiger, the Royal Bengal Tiger, the industry must grow tremendously ... I think Bangladesh can be/should be the number one RMG exporter in the world, replacing China ... that is my vision.

This is no foolish dream of an ambassador making up stuff. Indeed not ... this vision is supported by evidence: The McKinsey Report, Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan and others have all acknowledged Bangladesh's great potential to be the biggest exporter of RMG and household textiles in the entire world.

But it will not be easy to become the world's largest RMG and household textiles exporter. No, this will not be easy. It will take partnership ... strong partnership ... of you the workers, of you the owners, and of you the government.

This partnership must endeavor to create an environment, a climate that attracts the investors who are flooding out of China, where the RMG and household textiles industries are dying, as China rapidly moves up the economic ladder and prices itself out of these particular industries.

This creates great opportunity for Bangladesh ... that investment should come here ... to Bangladesh. As Bangladesh addresses and resolves various constraints that we all know ... inadequate port capacity, roads, railroads, power supply, energy, widespread corruption, rule of law challenges, and the specter of political instability ... I believe these investors will come to Bangladesh and Bangladesh over the next decade or two will become a middle-income country. One issue of concern to these investors ... and to RMG buyers in America ... is the issue of relations between labor and management. Each of you knows well the challenges on this front, so there is no need to repeat this afternoon the importance of resolving these labor issues so American buyers keep coming to Bangladesh.

I am pleased that the owners are considering engagement with the International Labor Organization to develop a Better Work program in Bangladesh. This program would create a tripartite arrangement of labor, owners and government to address labor issues in the industry. This program has been highly successful in Cambodia, Vietnam and so many other countries. I hope Bangladesh does not miss this opportunity to work with the ILO to make Bangladesh a preferred brand, a premium brand.

I call on BGMEA and BKMEA and other associations to immediately convey to the ILO their interest in pursuing a Better Work program as the ILO will decide in a few weeks whether to undertake a Better Work program in Bangladesh. If they decide against doing so, I believe Bangladesh will be left behind as buyers go to those countries where management and labor work together to the benefit of both rather than against each other.

Coming together ... that is what the Better Work program is about ... and that is what Iftar is all about ... coming together ... reflecting on our blessings, our many blessings, which for me include my being able to live and serve in Bangladesh, a country that I love deeply ... all of us, reflecting on our role in life ... reflecting on how small we are to the power of God ... this

is why Ramadan has special meaning for me ... this is why I am honored and yet again blessed to have this opportunity to share Iftar with you.

As we await the call to prayer and the breaking of the fast, I hope each of us will contemplate for a moment our many blessings and give our thanks to God.

Again, thank you for inviting me tonight to share this Iftar.

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GR/ 2012